



DOE NEWS

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WORK STEADILY PROGRESSING ON WASTE TREATMENT PLANT'S NUMEROUS SUPPORT FACILITIES

Engineering and construction workers are making progress toward completing the large industrial complex of support facilities that will one day enable the startup and operations of the Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Bechtel National, Inc. is designing and constructing the WTP for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Thirteen of the 20 Balance of Facilities that will support the WTP are under construction, three are complete, and four are being designed. All of the facilities must be complete, tested and ready to support the WTP when radioactive operations begin in 2019 to vitrify, or immobilize in glass, millions of gallons of waste stored in underground tanks at Hanford.

As the cornerstone of Hanford cleanup, the WTP is being designed and constructed as a standalone and self sufficient waste treatment facility. Early in the planning process, it was determined that Hanford's aging infrastructure could not be economically upgraded resulting in the need to design and construct the necessary support infrastructure.

The needed support utilities include electrical power distribution systems, backup power systems, compressed air, chilled water, process water, potable water, steam, and fire water. Glass formers for the vitrification process will also be stored, mixed and distributed at the WTP. To date, the interconnecting piping, and communication and control systems between facilities have been successfully installed.

"Basically all the support functions external to the Pretreatment, Low-Activity and High-Level waste vitrification, and Analytical Laboratory facilities are part of the Balance of Facilities," said DOE's WTP Project Manager John Eschenberg. "When complete, this facility will be the largest of its kind in the world, and it will take a lot of support capability to keep it operating day-to-day."

Once complete and operational, the WTP's Balance of Facilities will include:

- A chilled water system with sufficient capacity to cool 23,500 houses;

- An electrical power distribution large enough to supply power to 2250 houses;
- A compressed air system with capacity sufficient to fill the Goodyear blimp in 3 minutes;
- A fuel oil storage large enough to fill the gas tanks of 11,500 cars;
- A bank of emergency diesel generators capable of supplying power to 1500 houses; and
- A steam plant with enough heating capacity for 3300 households.

The WTP will be an industrial complex of facilities for separating and vitrifying (immobilizing in glass) millions of gallons of radioactive and chemical wastes stored at the Hanford Site. The five major components of the WTP will be the Pretreatment Facility for separating the waste, the High-Level Waste and Low-Activity Waste facilities where the waste will be immobilized in glass, the Analytical Laboratory for testing quality of the glass, and the Balance of Facilities which will comprise 20 various support facilities. Once complete, the WTP will be the largest and most capable facility of its kind in the world.

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